

I yield to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], the distinguished majority leader, to announce the schedule for the rest of the day.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, it is our intention today, as we are prepared to proceed on the rule for Medicare select, and then immediately after that, to move on to Medicare select. As the Speaker knows, this is very important legislation, and the timing is critical because of a deadline that must be met.

Following our completion of work on Medicare select, it is our intention to move on to the adjournment resolution, which needs a rule; so we will be doing the rule and then the adjournment resolution. Any other business scheduled for today is business that we can put over until after the Fourth of July work recess so that upon completion of the adjournment resolution, pending action in the Senate, we ought to be able to have completed our day's work. That ought to enable us to get our Members well on their way to their districts for the district work period by the scheduled 3 o'clock departure time.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I would simply inquire of the gentleman, this obviously means that changes in committee assignments will be held until after the Fourth of July recess?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, let me say, we would anticipate that action to take place sometime after 6 on Monday, the 10th.

As the Members might want to be reminded, we have tried to conclude the district work period by a return on Monday, the 10th, that would involve no votes before 5 on Monday, the 10th, to give that day to the Members for travel with a sense of security that they would not face a vote prior to 5 and have the opportunity to make their trip.

That being the case, we would not, since there seems to be a high interest in this matter of the committee appointment, we would not begin consideration of the committee appointment until after 6, probably, on Monday, the 10th. But we should, as I think we have indicated, expect that votes might begin as early as 5 on Monday, the 10th.

So we would do the four scheduled suspensions and then move on to the Medicare select—I am sorry, the committee assignment, International Relations, Appropriations, Resources, and so on as the week goes by. Monday night we will do the committee assignment after 6.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTERT). The gentleman will state it.

Mr. SOLOMON. Is it true that there will not be an intervening vote before

we take up the rules, and Members do not have to stay in the well of the House?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot anticipate what votes will come forward.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 483, MEDICARE SELECT POLICIES

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 180 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 180

Resolved, That, upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 483) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit medicare select policies to be offered in all States, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Commerce. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to final adoption without intervening motion. Upon the adoption of the conference report, Senate Concurrent Resolution 19 shall be considered as agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio [Mrs. PRYCE] is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. BEIL-ENSON], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence. Once again, that is the basic principle underlying our consideration of legislation to extend the Medicare Select Demonstration Program.

In April, the Rules Committee reported a timely rule for H.R. 483. Today, we bring to the floor a rule making in order the conference report accompanying H.R. 483, with only hours to go before this valuable program is set to expire.

In 1990, Congress created the 15-State demonstration Medicare Select Program to allow Medicare recipients the opportunity of purchasing a Medigap managed care option. The project in those states is set to expire today, June 30, and unless Congress takes prompt action to renew it, the insurance benefits of nearly half a million senior citizens covered by the Medicare Select Program would be in serious jeopardy.

The conference agreement extends the Medicare Select Program for a pe-

riod of 3 years. It also expands this option to seniors in all 50 States, and puts it on track to finally becoming permanent if the Secretary of Health and Human Services certifies that the program has met certain conditions.

In addition, the conference agreement clarifies that the definition of a State, for the purposes of this bill, includes the District of Columbia and the territories of the United States: Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

In order to expedite consideration of this conference agreement in the House, and to ensure that seniors will have uninterrupted coverage, the Committee on Rules has reported a straightforward and fair rule for this very necessary legislation.

Specifically, the rule provides for 1 hour of general debate on the conference report, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Commerce.

The rule also stipulates that the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to final adoption without any intervening motion.

Under the rule, all points of order against the conference report and its consideration are waived. While the Rules Committee generally prefers to avoid handing out such blanket waivers, this waiver and the rule itself are necessary because of a potential violation of clause 3 of rule XXVIII (28), which prohibits the inclusion of matters in a conference report beyond the scope of matters committed to conference by either Chamber.

A question has arisen as to the apparent lack of definition of the term State in either the House or Senate-passed bills. As I mentioned earlier in my statement, the conference report contains a definition of States which includes the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

The waiver granted in the rule is a precautionary step to ensure that passage of this critical legislation is not unnecessarily stalled by this particular provision or by any other unforeseen, yet potential violation contained in the conference report.

Members might be interested to know, also that this rule fully complies with the 3-day availability requirement for conference reports, as the report was filed on June 22.

Mr. Speaker, the conference agreement provides a reasonable balance to permit a very valuable, and successful program for our senior citizens to continue, while allowing us time to evaluate the program more closely before making it permanent.

Our colleagues should keep in mind that the Medicare Select Program provides seniors with another viable option to receive affordable medical care. Premiums under the select option have resulted in savings as high as 37 percent over traditional Medigap policies. By giving older Americans more